

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-28 remain in connection with the present application.

Personal Interview

Initially, Applicants wish to thank Examiners Abelson and Vanderpuye for the personal interview conducted on April 1, 2003. At the personal interview, it was agreed that each of claims 1-5 and 7-28 pending in connection with the present application are allowable over the prior art of record. For instance, in claim 1, lines 10-11, the language "each of said plurality of N-1 of port output buffers receives messages only from a corresponding input buffer corresponding to one of said N-1 other ports" was acknowledged by the Examiners as a limitation which is not taught or suggested by the prior art. Similar discussions were conducted with regard to independent claims 7 and 16, and it was agreed that these claims also clearly distinguished over the prior art of record. Further, brief remarks were made regarding independent claims 17, 18, 27 and 28, where it was agreed, for reasons somewhat similar to at least one of those previously discussed, that these claims were also allowable over the prior art of record.

At the conclusion of the interview, the Examiners agreed that each of the claims of the present invention were allowable and unobvious over the prior art of record. The Examiners agreed that the outstanding rejection would be withdrawn and that the claims would be allowed. At that time, the interview was concluded.

Claim Rejections Over Prior Art

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 11, 14, 15, 18, 22, 25 and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ojimoto. For reasons discussed at the personal interview of April 1, 2003, it was agreed that the claims of the present application distinguish over Ojimoto. Thus withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

Further, it is noted that the body of the rejection mentions claims 16, 17, 27 and 28. Regarding any possible rejection of these claims, such a rejection should also be withdrawn based on the statements made at the aforementioned interview.

The Examiner has further rejected claims 16, 17, 27 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Ojimoto in view of Gillon. This rejection is respectfully traversed in that the claims of the present application are clearly allowable over Ojimoto as pointed out at the personal interview. Further, with regard to any alleged combination of Gillon and Ojimoto, even assuming arguendo that they could be combined (which Applicants do not admit), Gillon has only been provided to provide a teaching of a direct memory access unit, and clearly does not make up for the deficiencies of Ojimoto as mentioned at the personal interview. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Minor Objections To The Specification And Claims

The Examiner has further objected to several terms used throughout the specification and claims. With regard to the specification, the Examiner has objected to the terms "generally full", "almost full", and "almost empty". In rejecting claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, the Examiner has objected to the use of the term "generally full". These objections and rejections are respectfully traversed.

Although not thoroughly addressed at the interview, with regard to the use of the phrase "generally full" in the claims and specification, for example, such a term is utilized in connection with, and in the context of, a fullness state of one of the ports. The phrase is also used in connection with a shut off means for, when the fullness state is indicated as being generally full, indicating that a device connected to the one port is not to send data for the port which is now generally full. Thus, the phrase must be analyzed in the context of the words surrounding it, and not in a vacuum. In such a context, the phrase has a clearly defined meaning and thus is not incomprehensible, vague or non-enabled.

In the context of the claim and specification, a meaning of the phrase is clearly enabled and comprehensible. For example, the phrase clearly indicates a type of threshold wherein, when a port is not completely full, but full enough ("generally full) at a point at which no data should be sent to that port, then a shut-off means indicates, to another device, not to send data to that port. In the context of the claim, and similarly in the context of the specification, the phrase is adequately defined, and is therefore clearly definite, not vague, and not incomprehensible as initially alleged by the Examiner. Somewhat similar arguments apply to the phrases "almost full" and "almost empty" as utilized in the specification. Accordingly, withdrawal of the Examiner's objection to the specification and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above remarks, reconsideration of all outstanding objections and rejections and allowance of each of claims 1-5 and 7-28 in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) hereby petition(s) for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a reply to the outstanding Office Action and submit the required \$110.00 extension fee herewith.

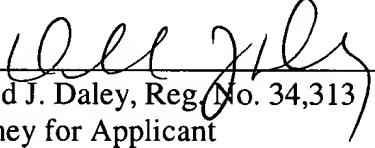
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Donald J. Daley, Reg. No. 34,313 at the telephone number (703) 390-3030.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKEY, & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By


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